

Jules Massenet and the Orphéon Tradition

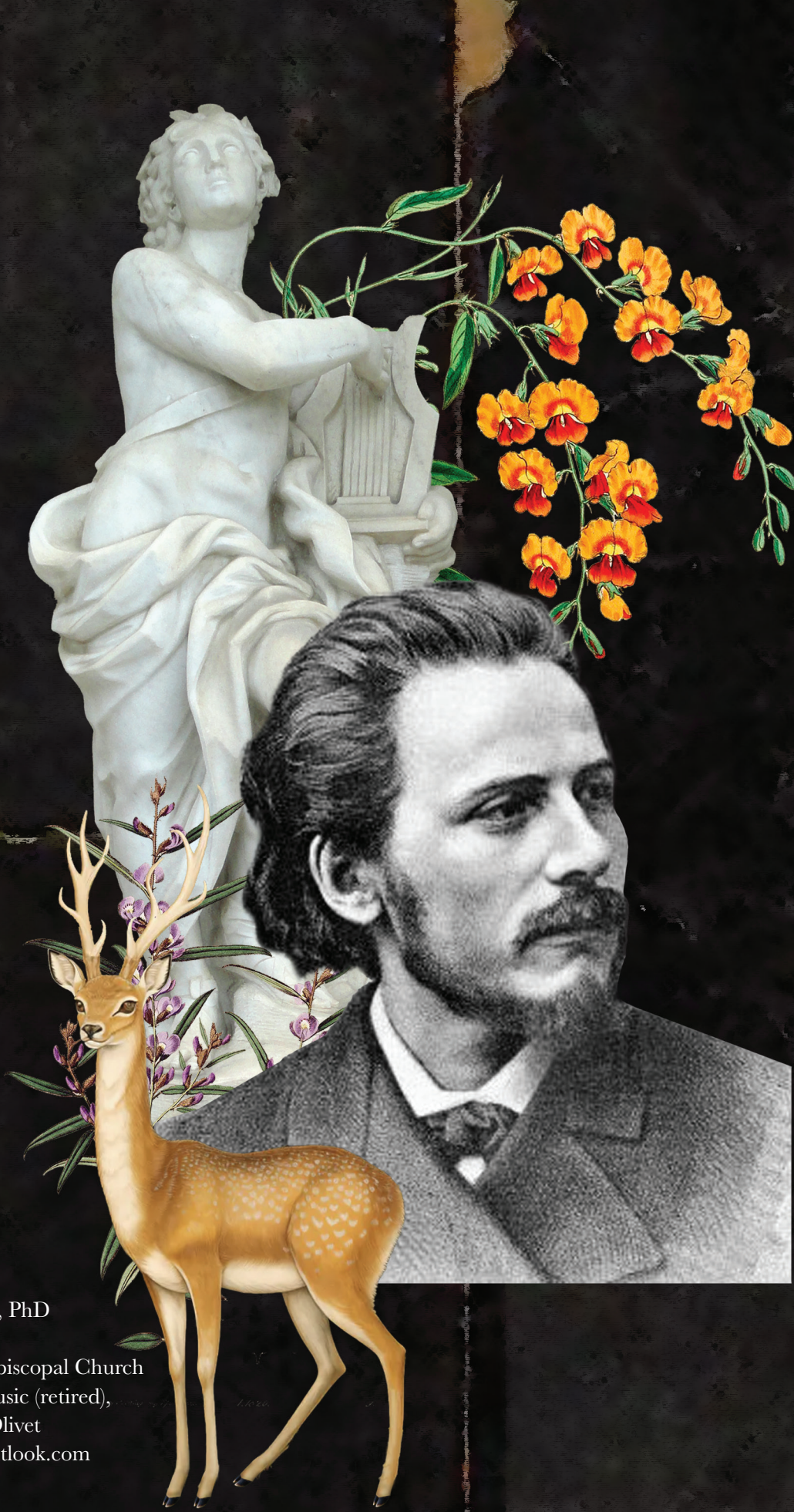


TIMOTHY FLYNN

Jules Massenet (1842–1912) was known primarily as a composer of theatre music, with over two dozen operas to his credit, which does not include the nine others that remain incomplete, recycled, or lost, as well as numerous examples of incidental music, oratorios, and ballets. He became famous throughout France and the world for his dramatic stage works. In addition to this, he composed over two hundred *mélodies* and piano pieces, many of which demonstrate his close ties to the salon tradition. He also composed several orchestral suites, a handful of chamber pieces, and other miscellaneous works.

One genre that seems to have escaped

public attention is his choral music. While in Italy as a Prix de Rome recipient, Massenet began composing a Mass, which was *de rigueur* for someone in his position to send back to Paris as one of their first pieces. In March of 1865, he reports as having composed the Kyrie and Gloria of a Mass, but ultimately he abandoned the work altogether.¹ Other attempts at composing a Mass also did not come to fruition. He did, however, compose a few small-scale solo motets, which were fashionable during the nineteenth century. According to his most recent biographer, Jean-Christophe Branger, many of what were considered larger scale choral pieces have either been lost, destroyed, or left as fragments.²



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There are several smaller choral works published by Massenet's two regular publishers, George Hartmann and Henri Heugel, while a few were published by E. et A. Girod (Paris). Many of these works demonstrate a close connection with the Orphéon tradition in France, which was popular throughout the nineteenth century and continued well into the post-World War II generation. Orphéon societies have an important social, political, and musical history and were amateur choral ensembles primarily (though not exclusively) comprising male voices.³

This article will offer a general overview of the importance of this amateur choral tradition in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century France and Massenet's relationship with it, while also examining three selected works that are still relevant to our contemporary music making: *Le Moulin*, *Vilanelle*, and *Moines et Forbans*.

The Orphéon Tradition

Clair Rowden aptly notes that France's choral tradition does not progress in an unbroken and smooth path of development as other national schools might.⁴ The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries are a good example of this. During the revolutionary period of the 1790s, the long tradition of choir schools that trained *maîtrises* (children) was abolished by the new Republic. Musicians eventually found work in the "emerging secular arena" especially among the grand Revolutionary spectacles that incorporated huge, massed choirs "symbolizing the brotherhood of humanity and the will of *le peuple* (the people)."⁵ Many famous composers such as François-Joseph Gossec, Étienne Méhul, and Luigi Cherubini wrote patriotic songs and hymns glorifying the new Republic. With the Concordat of 1801 between Napoléon Bonaparte and Pope Pius VII, sacred music along with some of its earlier traditions returned to France. During the so-called July Monarchy of Louis Philippe (1830–48), "the Republican tradition of popular massed choirs" continued to find a place in music making, especially with the establishment of the Orphéon movement.⁶

In 1833, Louis Bocquillon-Wilhelm (1781–1842) founded "a specifically Parisian orchestra of voices

alone made up of singers, most of them artisans, with only the most basic musical education"⁷ called the Orphéon movement. This undertaking, which Bocquillon-Wilhelm had originally begun with school children during the Bourbon Restoration in France (1814–1830), spread throughout the nineteenth century with Orphéon groups and festivals starting all around the country.⁸ Several prominent music periodicals, including the *Revue et gazette musicale*, *L'Art musical*, and *La Maîtrise*, dedicated articles to the movement and often reviewed performances and competitions of the various organizations. By the 1860s and 1870s, there were even specific journals devoted to the Orphéon movement, which included *La France orphéonique*, *La Presse orphéonique*, *L'Orphéon populaire*, and *Le Festival: journal musical et orphéonique*.⁹ While some of these periodicals were short lived, they were nevertheless important tools for reporting the concerts and competitions of various Orphéon societies throughout France as well as other musical events.

Orphéon societies prospered during the French Republic and the Second Empire of Napoleon III (1848–1870) as well as the ensuing Third Republic (1870–1940). According to French music scholar Jane Fulcher:

Cultural officials during the period of Napoleon III, saw music as a moral panacea to *ameliorate* the condition of the French working class. Throughout the Empire, the government was convinced of the need for the worker to be trained in the art, and further, of the importance of making good music accessible to this social group.¹⁰

The Orphéon society was an ideal resource not only for providing basic musical training but also for spreading the ideals and morality of Empire. These singing groups for the French worker—whether agricultural, artisan, or shop worker—were part of a utopian societal view of early French intellectual and social theorists, including Joseph Fourier (1768–1830) and August Comte (1798–1857). It was socially important that workers participated in musical endeavors because it was believed that this art form could civilize people. Various articles in the periodic press supported this be-



lief, stating that Orphéon societies would “provide a *noble distraction* for the workers.”¹¹ What is interesting is that, according to Fulcher:

The average French worker avidly sought self-improvement, welcoming all educational advantage as an escape from isolation, both social and cultural, and from the ignominy of the laboring class.¹²

The Third Republic also found the Orphéon tradition useful for championing the ideals of republicanism in post-Imperial France, which included a common culture, a right to education, legal equality, and democracy. These were ideals that the Orphéon symbolized, because it was an “amalgamation of politics, philosophy, and art, in an integral whole”¹³ standing for unity in which music had the power to reconcile differences in class. The leaders of the Third Republic believed music could contribute to a liberal democracy in four main ways: (1) music could discipline private desires and internalize public virtues; (2) music could serve as a connection between people who had diverse and at times conflicting social backgrounds; (3) music could help people negotiate differences and conflicts fashioning new identities; and (4) music could help inspire and create consensus amid uncertainty.¹⁴

With changes in the government due to the 1879 elections, politics and music embraced greater egalitarianism: Women and Protestants took a greater role in musical life; traditional French heroes were celebrated in both civil life and music (at this time, Saint-Saëns premiered his opera *Etienne Marcel*); and there was a greater visibility of contemporary French music with government subsidized music festivals, including large-scale choral and instrumental groups. Finally, secularism played a greater role in events that had previously been completely religious. Patriotic and secular music was often now mixed with religious music at the annual Good Friday concerts, for example.¹⁵

Music in general, and Orphéon societies specifically, played a role in the transmission of republican ideas not only to the audience but among the performers as well. Thus, middle- and lower-class workers, many of whom were rural or associated with agricultural work,

became the instruments of political and social change.

Massenet and the Orphéon Movement

During his career, Massenet was connected with the Orphéon movement as a composer of works predominately for men’s voices. In 1866, not long after his return to Paris from his *Prix de Rome* sojourn and while he was composing his first opera (a one-act opéra-comique, *La Grand’Tante*), Massenet won an Orphéonist competition with his two choruses, *Alleluia* and *Le Moulin*, both with texts by Gustave Chouquet (1819–1896). According to a review in *Le Moniteur des pianistes* (April 20, 1866), the *Alleluia* won first prize unanimously, and *Le Moulin* won second prize. To quote the critic: “The second chorus, written for four men’s voices, is picturesque with a strong melodic feel and there are none of the usual banalities.”¹⁶ The *Alleluia*, composed for mixed voices, is described as possessing “a brilliant sound and remarkable vigor” composed in the “grand manner of Handel.”¹⁷ Massenet made a very successful debut in the arena of music for Orphéon societies with these two pieces—types of compositions that he continued to cultivate throughout his career.¹⁸

Le Moulin

Le Moulin (*The Mill*) is a delightful piece that tells the story of millers and their work at the mill. Table 1 on the next page provides a translation of *Le Moulin* along with key areas, metric changes, tempo markings, and overall formal design. Massenet begins the chorus—which is in praise of the virtues of working in a mill—with points of imitation and musical motives that reflect the laughter mentioned in the text (Figure 1 on page 11). The publication indicates this chorus was the winner of the Competition of the City of Pairs in 1866.

The text of the chorus describes the work of the miller: “By the ferry the wheat comes to us in sacks, the flour leaves in sacks. The same morning at dawn we repeat again...” (*par le bac le froment nous vient en sac, par le bac la farine part en sac. Le soir comme a l’aurore nous repe-*

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tons encore).¹⁹ While the chorus begins in bright D major, at this point, the composer moves to D minor using common tone modulation. The chorus also contains a sense of national pride in the miller's work: "proud fellows, let us sing this cheerful refrain that pleases in France" (*fiers lurons nous chantons ce gai refrain qui plait en France*). To give even more color, the turning of the mill wheel is imitated in the first bass part with its constant "tic tac tic tac tic tac" with the accent on the offbeat (Figure 2 on page 12).

The B section of this rounded binary form is more introspective, and the musical style changes. Massenet modulates at first to B^b major before the music becomes more harmonically unstable. The text describes how the humble poor people dream of abundance, and the miller's work has "many charms"... it "cures the dark anxiety of the artisan and the orphan." There is also an implication that the work of the mill is for the benefit of both the "castle" and the "cottage," thus giving a sense of equality among the classes and bestowing a

Table 1. *Le Moulin* Translation with Musical Format

Form	Text	Key Area	Meter	Tempo	Measures
A	When our mill is full of wheat, laughter, and despair, white millers, proud fellows, let us sing, yes, let us sing this cheerful refrain that pleases us in France: tick tock tick tock tick tock.	D major and transitioning to D minor with common tone	2/4	<i>Allegretto bien rythmé</i>	29
	By the ferry the wheat comes to us in sacks, the flour leaves in sacks. The same morning at dawn we repeat again: tick tock tick tock, by the ferry the flour leaves in sacks, by the ferry leaves in sacks.	D minor	2/4	(no change)	40
B	Ah! In our cities, in our valleys, in the isolated countryside, do you hear the distant sound? To the humble roof in poverty, it dreams of abundance, and serves as an alarm clock, our work has many charms. It cures the dark anxieties of the artisan, the orphan. For the castle, the cottage, may the water of the river always turn our mill, turn the mill.	B ^b major; D minor; G minor; B ^b major (modulatory)	6/8	<i>Andante non troppo</i>	24
	White millers*, proud fellows, we sing this cheerful refrain that pleases us in France: tick tock tick *Refers to the millers being covered in white dust from the making of flour.	Transition to d minor	2/4	<i>Allegretto con moto</i>	48
A ^I	tock... By the ferry the wheat comes to us in sacks, the flour leaves in sacks. La la la la la...	Ending on D major			

LE MOULIN
 CHOEUR POUR QUATRE VOIX D'HOMME.
 Paroles de **GUSTAVE CHOUQUET.** Musique de **MASSENET**
 Couronné au Concours de la Ville de Paris 1865

All^{to} bien rythmé

1^{ers} TENORS
 2^{ds} TENORS
 BARYTONS
 BASSES

Lors que no - tremou - lin tour - ne
 Lors que no - tremou - lin no - tre mou - lin Lors que no tre mou -
 Lors que no - tremou - lin no - tre mou - lin tour - ne plein
 Lors que no - tre mou -

Leggiero

plein tour - ne. plein de - blé de ri - re
 - lin le mou - lin tour - ne. plein de - blé de ri - re
 tour - ne. plein de - blé
 lin tour - ne bien plein de

mf Ritard

de rire et d'es - pé - ran - ce blancs meu - niers
 de rire et d'es - pé - ran - ce blancs meu - niers
 ri - re, de rire et d'es - pé - ran - ce blancs meu - niers
 ri - re, de rire et d'es - pé - ran - ce blancs meu - niers

G. 5032. Paris E. et A. GIROD Editeurs Boulevard Montmartre 16

Figure 1. Jules Massenet, *Le Moulin*, c. 1866, mm. 1–13. IMSLP, Public Domain.

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sense of the importance of the physical labors of the millers for all of France. *Le Moulin* is a chorus in praise of the virtues of the humble yet important work of the miller. This idea is aligned with the political and social purpose of the Orphéon organizations, and as it was music of the laboring class, it was important these individuals felt pride in the importance of their work.

Vilanelle

Massenet continued to compose works for Orphéon organizations. In 1868, he was awarded second prize for a chorus titled *C'est Dieu* and third prize for another titled *En Avant*, both for the use of Orphéons.²⁰ *Vilanelle* was composed for four-part tenor/bass chorus and won a “Division supérieur” award in the Orphéon composition contest at the 1872 Exposition Universelle. This was the same year Massenet completed his oratorio *Marie-Magdeleine* and the year his full-scale opéra-comique, *Don César de Bazan*, premiered.

Vilanelle is a charming love song that gracefully captures the pastoral setting in which the singer dreams of his sweetheart and leisure time away from work.²¹ Massenet marked the score *très léger et quasi un scherzo* [very lightly and like a scherzo], and the rhythmic pulse

of the inner voices gives a frivolous and bouncing accompaniment to the melodic duet of the outer voices (Figure 3 on the next page).

The overall formal design of this chorus is a rounded binary. The first 49 measures are in G major and present the A section, while the B section begins in C major in m. 50 (Figure 4 on page 14). This central section, while brief, changes both the meter (from 6/8 to 3/4), and the tempo marking changes to *Andantino simple et tranquille*. Then in measure 67, part of the A section returns, creating the rounded portion of the form. The ancient *forme fixe* of a *villanelle* is more complex, especially in its poetry and rhyme scheme, so it is clear that Massenet’s inspiration was simply in the rustic and pastoral qualities of the genre, not in its structural elements.

Vilanelle is not without its musical challenges, and according to *Le Ménestrel* (August 18, 1872), this chorus was used as the competition piece at the 1872 Exposition for Orphéon groups at the “division supérieur.”²² It undoubtedly remained a popular composition for accomplished Orphéonistes and was being performed at festivals and competitions as late as 1898.²³ Table 2 on page 15 offers a diagram of the musical form with a translation of the text.

The musical score for Jules Massenet's *Le Moulin*, measures 20–36, is presented for four voices: T1 (Tenor 1), T2 (Tenor 2), B1 (Bass 1), and B2 (Bass 2). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 6/8. The lyrics are: "Par le bac Par le bac le fro - ment nous vient en". The B1 part has a rhythmic accompaniment of "tic tac tic tac".

Figure 2. Jules Massenet, *Le Moulin*, ca. 1866, mm. 20–36.
IMSLP, Public Domain.



VILANELLE
CHOEUR À 4 VOIX.
Couronné au Concours de Composition Musicale
de l'Exposition Universelle de Paris de 1872.

Paroles de **J. RUELE.** Musique de **J. MASSENET.**

En vente au Bureau du journal L'ORPHEON, 25, Rue de Navarin.

All^o vivo. (♩ = 138)
très léger et quasi un scherzo. *pon 1^o* *p dol.*

1^{er} TÉNORS. 2^{me} TÉNORS. 1^{re} BASSES. 2^{me} BASSES.

f *dim.* *pp* *p dol.*

Eoiseau ga

la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la

la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la

la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la

Allons au bois, le chêne pous-se, al -

-zouille dans le bois; On entend

la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la

la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la

-lons au bois! Et sur la branche et sur la mousse, al -

de joyeu-ses voix! On en-tend de joyeu-ses

la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la

la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la

-lons au bois! On en-tend de joyeu-ses

1872

MUS

Figure 3. Jules Massenet, *Vilanelle*, 1872, mm. 1–11. IMSLP, Public Domain.

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allarg. **Andante simple et tranquille** (♩ = 69)

The musical score is arranged in four staves, labeled T1, T2, B1, and B2. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked 'Andante simple et tranquille' with a quarter note equal to 69 beats per minute. The score begins at measure 45 with a forte (f) dynamic and a fermata. The lyrics are in French. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings like *pp sotto voce*. The lyrics are as follows:

Measures 45-51:

T1: bois! al-lons au bois! Sous la bran-che fleu-ri - e c'est
T2: bois! al-lons au bois! Sous la bran - che
B1: bois! al-lons au bois! Sous la bran - che
B2: bois! al-lons au bois! Sous la bran - che

Measures 52-56:

T1: un bien doux plai - sir! De rê-ver a sa mi - e, de rê-ver à loi -
T2: c'est un doux plai - sire! De rê-ver, de rê-ver à loi -
B1: c'est un doux plai - sir! De rê-ver, de rê-ver à loi -
B2: c'est un plai - sir! De rê-ver, de rê-ver à loi -

Measures 57-60:

T1: sir! Ou dit à la fau-vet - te le nom de
T2: sir! Ou dit à l'oi - deau le nom de ses
B1: *pp* sir! Ou dit à la fau-vette ou dit le nom de ses a-mours et l'é-cho, l'é-cho le re-pê-te
B2: sire! Ou dit à l'oi - seau le doux nom de

Figure 4. Jules Massenet, *Vilanelle*, 1872, mm. 45–60.
IMSLP, Public Domain.



Moines et Forbans

A third chorus by Massenet associated with the Orphéon tradition is *Moines et Forbans*. The work's title page indicates that it was composed for use as a competition piece for Orphéon groups at the "superior division" at the competition in Lyon on May 20, 1877. This chorus also became popular and was still being used as a competition piece as late as 1897, according to the review from *La Nouvelle France Chorale*.²⁴

Moines et Forbans (Monks and Pirates) is a large-scale dramatic work that makes various technical demands upon the performers and contains effective elements that enhance the drama. Composed in a large binary form, the A section is subdivided into three subsections (Table 3 on the next page). The first, in a rocking 12/8, sets the stage of evening on the water near the monastery as the Angelus bells are ringing and prayers are being said over the "blue ocean." The Gregorian chant melody of the "Pater noster" is heard quoted by the

first tenors like a priest intoning the prayer, while the other voices comment on the rising of the pious chant (Figure 5 on page 17).

The following subsection is a French paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer in E^b major in a simple homorhythmic chorale-like setting. As this section comes to a soft, plaintive conclusion, a few measures of transition prepare the listener for the "hellish refrain" coming from the sea, which responds to the prayer just sung "to the God of Light."

The contrasting large B section ensues, in which a ship of pirates on the ocean proclaim, "War on the monks, war on the nuns!" as they prepare to pillage and attack. With daggers in hand, the pirates are ready to disembark and sack the convent and monastery. Massenet uses both homophonic declamation as the pirates shout as well as points of imitation as they cry, "Forward, forward, pillage!" This section builds to a feverish climax in the coda, rivaling of some of Massenet's

Table 2. *Vilanelle* Translation and Musical Format

Form	Text	Key Area	Meter	Tempo	Measures
A	The bird chirps in the wood; we hear joyful voices, let's go to the woods! The oak is growing, let's go to the woods. We hear voices there. Let's go to the woods! [with repetitions]	G major	6/8	<i>très léger et quasi un scherzo</i>	49
B	Under the flowering branches, it's a very sweet pleasure to dream of one's sweetheart, to dream of leisure, or to tell the warbler the name of one's love, and the echo repeats it until the last fine days. Let's go to the woods!	C major that modulates back to G	3/4	<i>Andantino simple et tranquille</i>	16
A'	The bird chirps in the wood; we hear joyful voices, let's go to the woods! The oak is growing, let's go to the woods. We hear voices there. Let's go to the woods!	G major	6/8	Tempo I° <i>Meme mouvement en admettant que la croche de la mesure précédente</i>	33

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Table 3. *Moines et Forbans* Translation and Musical Format

Section	Text	Key Areas	Meter	Tempo	Measures
A	Night will cover the blue ocean with its veil, the coast where the golden broom grows. The Angelus rings, barely in the sky, a star shines for another hour, and everything falls asleep, yes, everything falls asleep. "Our Father who is in heaven" while the waves at the shore come to murmur their complaint or their confession of love. "Our Father who is in heaven," from the walls of a canopy rises this pious chant that we love to say every day.	B ^b major	12/8	<i>Andante sostenuto</i>	1-23
	May your holy name, Great God, Our Father, always be blessed, always be sung. Grant bread to our misery! May it be done according to your will, O God, Our Father, in heaven as on earth. Pour out the treasures of your indulgence, merciful God, upon us who offend you. We will forgive those who offend us. Good God, save us when we groan, and all evil yields to your power.	E ^b major	2/4	<i>Andante religioso</i>	24-65
	To this prayer to the God of Light, this hellish refrain responds on the sea.	Modulates to G major	4/4	<i>Allegro moderato</i>	66-69
B	War on the monks, war on the nuns! From the convent onto the deck, let's carry the large tons! From the convent, let's sack it! War on the monks, war on the nuns! At midnight, our crew, dagger in hand, will disembark; at midnight everyone will say, "Forward, pirates! Forward! Pillage! War on the monks, war on the	G major	2/4	<i>Allegro brillante</i>	70-131
	nuns! Nothing is as joyful as a voyage, which begins the cry: Pillage! War on the monks, war on the nuns! Forward pirates! Forward! Pillage! From the convent, let's sack it! War on the monks, war on the nuns! From the convent, let's sack it! Pillage! Pillage! Forward! Forward, pirates!			<i>Très accentué</i>	132-152

own opera choruses (Figure 6 on the next page). Unlike some of the composer's choruses for the Orphéon societies, this work contains a complete narrative rather than a poetic text. The musical style and dramatic content of this chorus remind the listener of opera choruses typical of the French Romantic period. See Table 3 for a translation and description of the music form.

It could be argued that the text of *Moines et Forbans* promotes, albeit in a surreptitious fashion, the anti-clerical position of republican ideals of the French Third Republic (1870–1940). During the time of the composition of this piece for the competition in Lyon, Georges Clemenceau (1841–1929) announced that he was running for office, and his platform included many secular liberties such as freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of assembly. He also desired to expel the Jesuits and establish free, secular, and compulsory primary education, the final point being the *coup de grâce* of the republican idea of the separation of Church and state.²⁵ So, this chorus composed for an Orphéon competition appears to contain some undercurrents of anti-clericism and contributes to the tensions between the rising tide of republicanism promoted by progressives and the conservative political beliefs of the Catholic Church.

Conclusion

Massenet maintained a relationship with the Orphéon tradition to varying degrees throughout his entire career. According to the most recently published works list of the composer provided by Jean-Christophe Branger, Massenet composed works for tenor/bass beginning in 1866, and the last one he composed was in 1912, the year of his death (Table 4 on page 19).²⁶

Many of these compositions were created as competition pieces for Orphéon groups, while others became favorites of such ensembles. For example, *La caravane perdue* appeared regularly in concerts of Orphéon societies between 1885 and 1898, and it is mentioned frequently in one of the Orphéon journals, *La Nouvelle France Chorale*.²⁷ This work seems to be one of the more popular compositions, no doubt due to the musical exoticism employed by Massenet, which was very much in vogue during this time. The chorus *Le Sylphe* was dedicated to Massenet's longtime friend, music critic Julien Torchet (see Figure 7 on page 20), and it was performed as a competition piece for the "division d'excellence" in Lyon.²⁸ Another such work, *Amour!*, was composed in 1880 for the "Concours institutionnel de Romans et Bourg-de-Péage" (Figure 8 on page 21).

In July 1912, Massenet composed his final chorus, *Morte à Néron*. At the conclusion of the manuscript, he

A Même mouvement

15 **f** PA - TER NOS - TER QUI ES IN CÆ - LIS

16 **mf** Tan - dis que le flot à la

17 **mf** Tan - dis que le flot à la

Figure 5. Jules Massenet, *Moines et Forbans*, 1877, mm. 15–17.
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111 *f*

T1 Guerre aux moi- nes! Rien n'est gai _____ comme un voy - a - ge Qui com -

T2 mi - nuit! _____ Guerre aux moi- nes!

B1 _____ comme un voy - a - ge Qui com- mence au cri: Pil - la - ge! Pil - la -

B2 *f* Guerre aux non - nes! à

117 *M*

T1 mence au cri: Pi - la - ge! Pi - la - ge! En a - vant for- bans! *ff*

T2 Rien n'est gai _____ comme un voy - a - ge! En a - vant for- bans! *ff*

B1 ge! Cha- cun di - ra: à mi - nuit. _____ En a - vant for- bans! *ff*

B2 mi - nuit, cha- cun di - ra: _____ En a - vant for- bans! En a -

124 *a tempo*

T1 En a - vant! Pil - la - ge! Guerre aux moi- nes! Guerre aux non - nes!

T2 En a - vant! _____ Pil - la - ge! Guerre aux moi- nes! Guerre aux non - nes!

B1 En a - vant! _____ Pil - la - ge! Guerre aux moi- nes! Guerre aux non - nes!

B2 vant! _____ Pil - la - ge! Guerre aux moi- nes! Guerre aux non - nes!

Figure 6. Jules Massenet, *Moines et Forbans*, 1877, mm. 111–131.
IMSLP, Public Domain.



Table 4. List of Music for Tenor/Bass by Massenet

Title	Date	Poet	Publisher
<i>Alleluia</i> (for TTBB and another version for SSTB)	1866	Gustave Chouquet	Girod
<i>Le Moulin</i>	1866 (?)	Gustave Chouquet	Girod
<i>Hymne à la paix</i> (the second version is for TTBB voices)	1867 (?)	Gustave Chouquet	MS: F-Pan, F12 3098
<i>Villanelle</i>	1872	Jules Ruelle	L'Orphéon
<i>La caravane perdue</i>	1876 (?)	Gustave Bazin	Georges Hartmann
<i>Moines et forbans</i>	1877	Gustave Chouquet	Georges Hartmann
<i>Le Sylphe</i>	1879	Émile Bernier	Georges Hartmann
<i>Amour!</i>	1880	Paul Millet	Georges Hartmann
<i>1812</i>	1886	Émile Bernier	Georges Hartmann
<i>Donnons</i>	1889/90	Georges Boyer	Georges Hartmann
<i>Chant de concorde</i>	1893	Simon Salmona	Henri Heugel
<i>Alerte!</i>	1898 (?)	Joseph Maissiat	Henri Heugel
<i>Morte à Néron</i>	1912	Maurice Galerne	Henri Heugel

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wrote “cruelle chaleur” [cruel heat]. This work, according to Jean-Christophe Branger, “is perhaps his last fully completed piece.”²⁹ Massenet died on August 13, 1912.

These works for tenor/bass voices born from the longstanding Orphéon tradition, as well as other choruses for mixed voices, demonstrate Massenet’s unique creativity as a composer. His ability to capture the image and drama of a given text is heard not only in his large-scale works for the stage but also in these smaller

unaccompanied works, where he has only voices to rely on. Massenet was a composer who was able to take simple elements and create something dramatic and emotional, and his writing always “displays a true mixture of training and talent.”³⁰ His choral works represent music from a rather lost tradition, but they remain as vibrant, interesting, and rewarding now as they were when they were composed. As his great rival, Camille Saint-Saëns, remarked upon the composer’s death, “Many have imitated Massenet; he imitated no one.”³¹ C

The image shows a handwritten musical score for the piece "Le Sylphe" by Jules Massenet. The score is written on aged, yellowed paper with blue ink. It features four staves: two for vocal parts (Soprano and Tenor/Bass) and two for piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked "Allegro Scherzando" with a time signature of 3/4. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score is numbered 1 through 19. There are various annotations and markings throughout, including "à mon ami Julien Tardet" at the top left, "Le Sylphe" at the top center, and "poésie de J. Bernier" and "musique de J. Massenet" at the top right. The lyrics are in French, such as "Sur ton aile arden- te!", "Pars, sylphe amoureux!", and "Beau sylphe léger, fais-moi voya- ger". There are also some red circular stamps at the bottom, one of which says "BIBLIOTHEQUE".

Figure 7. Jules Massenet, *Le sylphe*, 1879, mm. 1–7. IMSLP, Public Domain.

(Entrée pour le Concours international de Roumans et Bourg-de-Péage -)
8-9 août 1880.

Amour !...

pièces de Paul Milliet. — Josephes pour la voix de hommes.

Andantino Cantabile — (60 = 1) —

Reve ou divin mys — te — re, l'amour dans son effort, Nous ar —
Reve ou mys — ti — re, l'amour dans son effort.
Reve ou divin mysti — re, l'amour dans son effort, Nous ar —
Reve ou mysti — re, l'amour dans son effort, Nous ar —

mes: — — —

zache à la terre avec les ai — les d'or... Coeurs joyeux...
Nous arrache à la terre à vue les ai — les d'or... Coeurs joyeux
zache à la terre à vue les ai — les d'or... les ailes d'or...
— zache à la terre à vue les ai — les d'or... Coeurs joyeux

ou moro — les, Vous aimerez un jour: L'é — ti — sème les
d'un: Vous aimerez un jour: L'é — ti — sème les
Cœurs moro — les, Vous aimerez un jour: L'é — ti — sème les
d'un: Vous aimerez un jour: L'é — ti — sème les

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Figure 8. Jules Massenet, *Amour!*, 1880, mm. 1–4. IMSLP, Public Domain.

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NOTES

- ¹ Demar Irvine, *Massenet: A Chronicle of His Life and Times* (Ama-deus Press, 1997), 31–32.
- ² Jean-Christophe Branger, *Jules Massenet une vie au service du théâtre* (Paris: Fayard, 2024), 996.
- ³ Branger, *Jules Massenet*, 994–95.
- ⁴ Clair Rowden, “Choral Music and Music-Making in France,” in *Nineteenth-Century Choral Music*, ed. Donna M. Di Grazia, (Routledge, 2013), 207.
- ⁵ Rowden, “Choral Music and Music-Making in France.”
- ⁶ Rowden, “Choral Music and Music-Making in France.”
- ⁷ Jann Pasler, *Composing the Citizen: Music as Public Utility in Third Republic France* (University of California Press, 2009), 197.
- ⁸ Jane Fulcher, “The Orphéon Societies: ‘Music for the Workers’ in Second Empire France,” *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 10, no. 1 (June 1979): 48.
- ⁹ These periodicals and others can be found in the Bibliothèque nationale de France.
- ¹⁰ Fulcher, “The Orphéon Societies,” 47.
- ¹¹ Fulcher, “The Orphéon Societies,” 52.
- ¹² Quoted in Fulcher, “The Orphéon Societies,” 53.
- ¹³ Fulcher, “The Orphéon Societies,” 56.
- ¹⁴ Pasler, *Composing the Citizen*, 84–90.
- ¹⁵ Pasler, *Composing the Citizen*, 304–07.
- ¹⁶ Branger, *Jules Massenet*, 102.
- ¹⁷ Branger, *Jules Massenet*, 102.
- ¹⁸ Branger states that Massenet only cultivates this type of music until the 1880s, but the list of works Branger himself supplies suggests that Massenet continues composing works for TTBB voices and other vocal arrangements used by Orphéon societies well into the 1890s and even one such composition, *Mort à Néron*, in 1912, the year of his death.
- ¹⁹ The translations of the texts are by the author unless otherwise stated.
- ²⁰ “Paris et Départements,” *Le Ménestrel* (February 16, 1868): 93. Branger, *Jules Massenet*, mentions the chorus *En Avant* in his list of Massenet’s works in his most recent and comprehensive study on the composer. However, there is no mention of *C’est Dieu. En Avant* he dates as being composed in “1867?” and he posits that presently it is lost.
- ²¹ There is some possible *double entendre* in the text, which reads, “Let’s go to the woods...the oak is growing, let’s go to the woods” [*allons au bois!...Le chêne pousse allons au bois*], because it is there, in the woods, that the singer dreams of his sweetheart and tells the warbler the name of his lover.
- ²² Anon., “Concours de Composition Musicale ouvert par la Direction de l’Exposition d’Économie Domestique,” *Le Ménestrel* (August 18, 1872): 340.
- ²³ Anon., “Fêtes et concerts,” *La Nouvelle France Chorale* (February 16, 1898): 1.
- ²⁴ Anon., “Concours d’Éxecution: sociétés chorales,” *La Nouvelle France Chorale* (June 16, 1897): 1.
- ²⁵ Mary McAuliffe, *Dawn of the Belle Époque* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2011): 64.
- ²⁶ Branger, *Jules Massenet*, 994.
- ²⁷ This is but a few of the issues in which performances of this work were reported. J. Monestier, “Concours d’exécution au Grand Théâtre” (July 1, 1885): n. p.; Anon., “Appéciation du Jury, Cercle Choral de Chambéry” (September 1, 1893): 1; Anon., “Concert: Le Mans concert Populaire de la Société Chorale” (Nov. 16, 1894): n. p.; Anon., “Fêtes et concerts” (February 16, 1898). According to WorldCat, the only copy of this chorus, *La caravane perdue*, is found at the Bibliothèque nationale de France.
- ²⁸ Anon., “Concours d’exécution division d’excellence (Lyon), *La Nouvelle France Chorale* (September 1, 1881): n.p.
- ²⁹ Branger, *Jules Massenet*, 951.
- ³⁰ Hervé Oléon and Mary Dibbern, *Massenet: Catalogue Général des Oeuvres* (Pendragon Press, 2016): xxvii.
- ³¹ Camille Saint-Saëns, “Jules Massenet,” *L’Écho de Paris* (October 13, 1912): 1.